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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 000727

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WHA/BSC (KREAD), WHA/USOAS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/29/2027
TAGS: PGOV KDEM PREL PA
SUBJECT: ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL REQUESTS ELECTIONS ASSISTANCE

Classified By: DCM Michael Fitzpatrick; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Electoral Tribunal (TSJE) Judges Juan
Manual Morales, Rafael Dendia, and Alberto Ramirez requested
elections assistance from the United States during August 23
- 25 meetings with POL Chief and PolOff. The judges stressed
the importance of international observers for Paraguay's
primaries in December 2007 and January 2008, as well as
national elections scheduled for April 20, 2008. They
indicated they would invite international observers such as
the OAS, CAPEL, and the European Union, but hoped the
observers would plan to cover the primaries, several months
before the general election, and at least one month following
the election. They also requested technical assistance for
at least one month to help the tribunal prepare for elections
and restore its institutional credibility. Finally, the
judges asked for assistance in engaging civil society in the
electoral process to ensure greater transparency in
transmitting election results. Please advise ASAP. END
ACTION REQUEST.

¶2. (C) COMMENT: The TSJE has come under fire for being overly
politicized, a characteristic of many Paraguayan government
institutions. With the possibility that the Colorado Party's
60-year rule is now threatened by the political opposition,
the tribunal needs technical and institutional support. Post
sees an international elections observation mission,
technical support, and an active civil society as key to the
tribunal's success, and as key to Paraguay's democratic
stability. END COMMENT.

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